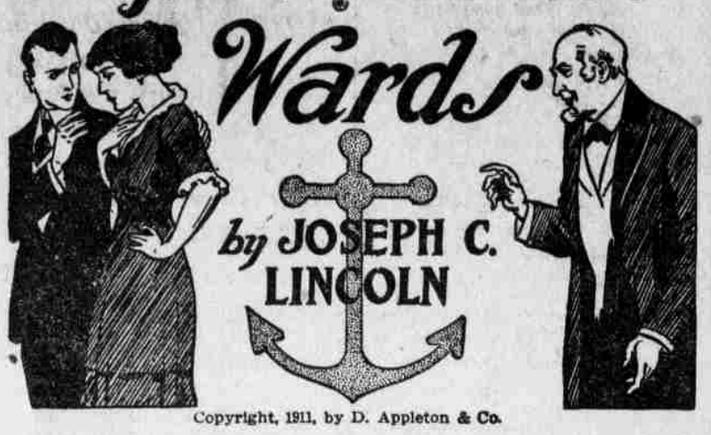
Cap'n Warren's Wards



by JOSEPH C. LINCOLN

THE CAPTAIN FORCES MALCOLM DUNN, SOMEWHAT UNWILLINGLY, TO ACT A MAN'S PART

Synopsis.—Atwood Graves, New York lawyer, goes to South Densboro, Cape Cod, to see Captain Elisha Warren. Caught in a terrific storm while on the way, he meets Cap'n Warren by accident and goes with the latter to his home. The lawyer informs Cap'n Warren that his brother, whom he had not seen for eighteen years, has died and named him as guardian of his two children, Caroline aged twenty, and Stephen, aged nineteen. The captain tells Graves he will go to New York and look over the situation before deciding whether he will accept the trust. The captain's arrival in New York causes consternation among his wards and their aristocratic friends. The captain makes friends with James Pearson, a reporter; then he consults with Sylvester, head of Graves' firm. The captain decides to accept his brother's trust. Sylvester is pleased, but Graves expresses disgust and dismay.

CHAPTER VII—Continued.

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The captain said that he would be down later on to talk things over. Meanwhile, if the "papers and such" could be got together, it would "sort of help along."

When Mrs. Corcoran Dunn made her daily visit to the Warren apartment that afternoon she found Caroline alone and almost in tears. Captain Elisha had broken the news at the table during luncheon, after which he went downtown. Stephen, having raved, protested and made himself generally disagreeable and his sister correspondingly miserable, had departed for the club. It was a time for confidences, and the wily Mrs. Dunn realized that fact. She soothed, comforted and within half an hour had learned the whole story. Incidentally she learned that a possible five hundred thousand was the extreme limit of the family's pecuniary resources.

"Now you know everything!" sobbed Caroline. "Oh, Mrs. Dunn, you won't desert us, will you?"

"You may depend on Malcolm and me, dear," Mrs. Dunn declared. "We are not fair weather friends. And, after all, it is not so very bad. Affairs might be very much worse."

"Worse! Oh, Mrs. Dunn, how could they be? Think of it! Stephen and I are dependent upon him for everything. We must ask him for every penny. And whatever he says to do we must do. We're obliged to."

On Thursday after luncheon as Captain Elisha sat in his own room reading a book he had taken from the library there came a knock at the door.

"Come ahead in!" ordered the captain. Caroline entered. Her uncle rose and put down the book.

"Oh," he exclaimed, "is it you? Excuse me. I thought 'twas the commodore—Edwards, I mean. If I'd known you was comin' callin', Caroline, I shouldn't have been quite so bossy."

"Thank you," answered his niece. "I came to see you on—I suppose you might call it business. At any rate, it is a financial matter. I sha'n't detain you long."

Captain Elisha was a trifle disappointed.

"Oh," he said, "on business, was it? I hoped—I didn't know but you'd come just out of sociability. However, I'm mighty glad to see you, Caroline."

"Captain Warren," she began, "I—I came to ask a favor. I am obliged to ask it because you are our"—she almost choked over the hated word—"our guardian, and I can no longer act on my own responsibility. I wish to ask you for some money."

Captain Elisha nodded gravely.

"I see," he said. "Well, Caroline, I don't believe you'll find me very close fisted. I think I told you and Steve that you was to do just as you'd been in the habit of doin'. Is your reg'lar allowance too small? Remember, I don't know much about such things here in New York, and you must be frank and aboveboard and tell me if you have any complaints."

"I have no complaints. My allowance is sufficient. It is the same that father used to give me, and it is all I need. One of the maids, Annie, has trouble at home, and I wanted to help her."

The captain nodded once more.

"Annie," he repeated, "that's the rosy faced one, the Irish one?"

"Yes. Her father was seriously injured the other day and cannot work. His hip is broken, and the doctor's bill will be large. They are very poor, and I thought perhaps"— She hesitated, faltered and then said haughtily, "Father was very sympathetic and liked to have me do such things."

"Sho! Sho! Sartin! Course he did. I like it too. I'm glad you came to me just as you did, Caroline. How much do you want to start with?"

"I don't know exactly. I thought I might ask our own doctor to attend to the case and might send them some delicacies and food."

"Good idea! Go right ahead, Caroline. How'd the accident happen? Anybody's fault, was it?"

Caroline's eyes snapped. "Indeed it was!" she said indignantly. "It was a wet morning after a rain, and the pavement was slippery. Mr. Moriarty, Annie's father, was not working that day, and he had gone out to do the family marketing. He was crossing the street when an automobile, recklessly driven, so every one says, drove directly down on him. He tried to jump out of the way and succeeded, otherwise he might have been killed, but he fell and broke his hip. He is an old man, and the case is serious."

"Dear, dear, you don't tell me! Poor old chap! The auto feller—did he help? Seems to me he ought to be the one to be spendin' the money. 'Twas his fault."

"Help! Indeed, he didn't! He and the man with him merely laughed as if it was a good joke, put on speed and disappeared as quickly as possible."

"Why, the mean swab! Did this Mr. Moriarty or the folks around get the license number of the auto?"

"No. All they know is that it was a big yellow car with two men in it."

"Hey? A yeller car?"

"Yes. Somewhat similar to the one Malcolm—Mr. Dunn—drives."

"So, so! Hum! Where did it happen?"

"On St. Nicholas avenue, near One Hundred and Twenty-eighth street."

"Eh? St. Nicholas avenue, you say?"

"Yes." Caroline rose and turned to go. "Thank you, Captain Warren," she said. "I will tell Dr. Henry to take the case at once."

The captain did not answer immediately. With his chin in his hand he was gazing at the floor.

"Good afternoon," said Caroline.

Her uncle looked up.

"Er—wait just a minute, Caroline," he said. "You have your doctor go right ahead and see to the old man, and you order the things to eat and whatever's necessary. But afore you give Annie or her father any money I'd kind of like to figger a little mite."

His niece stopped short, turned and stared at him.

"Oh," she said slowly and icily, "I understand—thoroughly. Don't trouble to 'figure,' as you call it. Oh, why did I humiliate myself? I should have known!"

"Caroline, please"—

But the girl had gone, closing the door after her.

Half an hour later the captain called upon Malcolm Dunn, who was much surprised to see him.

Captain Elisha took the offered chair and dropped his hat on the floor beside it.

"Well," observed the young man after a moment, "what's the trouble, admiral? Better get it off your chest, hadn't you? We're private enough here."

"I came to see you about an automobile," said the captain.

"An automobile!" The young man was so astonished that he actually removed his feet from the desk. Then he burst into a laugh. "An automobile?" he repeated. "Captain, has the influence of the metropolis made you a sport already? Do you want to buy a car?"

"Buy one?" It was Captain Elisha's turn to show irritation. "Buy one of them things? Me? No, Mr. Dunn, 'tain't that. But one of the hired help up to our place—Caroline's place, I mean—is in trouble on account of one of the dratted machines. They're poor folks, of course, and they need money to help 'em through the doctorin' and nursin' and while the old man's out of work. Caroline was for givin' it to 'em right off. She's a good hearted girl, but I said—that is, I kind of coaxed her out of it. I thought I'd ask some questions first. Here's the first one: Don't it seem to you that the right one to pay for the doctorin' and nursin' and such of Mr. Moriarty—that's Annie's pa—ought to be the feller who hurt him? That feller instead of Caroline?"

"Sure thing! If you know who did it he's your mark."

"Um-hm. So I thought. And if he was a right minded chap he'd be glad to help the poor critter, providin' he knew what damage he'd done, wouldn't you think so?"

Malcolm nodded sagely, opened his mouth to speak and then closed it again. A sudden recollection came to him, an alarming recollection.

"Where did this accident happen?" asked Mr. Dunn, his condescending smile absent.

"At the corner of St. Nicholas avenue and One Hundred and Twenty-eighth street. It happened last Friday mornin' a week ago. And the car that hit him was a yellow one. Naturally, when I heard about it I remembered what you told Mr. Sylvester and me at the club that afternoon. I understand how 'twas of course. If you'd known you'd really hurt the poor old man you'd have stopped to see him. I understand that. But"—

"Look here," interrupted Dunn sharply, "did Caroline send you to me?"

"Caroline? No, no! She don't know 'twas your automobile at all. But afore she spent any of her money I thought you'd ought to know, because I was sure you wouldn't let her. That's the way I'd feel, and I felt 'twas no more'n honest to give you the chance. I come on my own hook. She didn't know anything about it."

Malcolm drummed on the desk with nervous fingers.

"Well," he growled pettishly, "how much will it take to square things with the gang? How much damages do they want?"

"Damages? Oh, there won't be any claim for damages, I guess. The Moriartys don't know you did it, and there's no reason why they should. I thought maybe I'd see to 'em and do whatever was necessary, then you could settle with me, and the whole business would be just between us two. Outside the doctor's bills and food and nursin' and such all the extry will be just the old man's wages for the time he's away from the factory. 'Twon't be very heavy."

"All right! I'm in it, I can see that, and it's up to me to get out as easy as I can. I don't want any newspaper publicity. Go ahead. I'll pay the freight."

Captain Elisha arose and picked up his hat.

Malcolm, frowning heavily, suddenly asked a final question.

"Say," he demanded, "you'll not tell Caroline or Steve a word of this, mind!"

The captain seemed surprised.

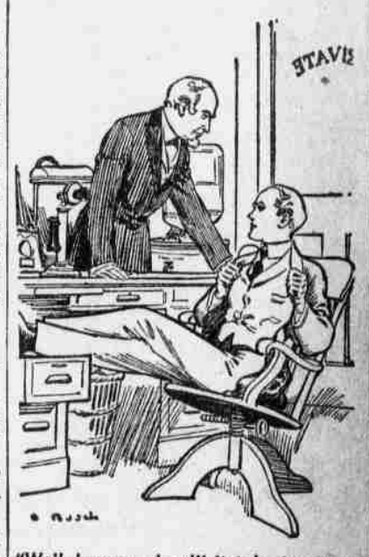
"I guess you didn't catch what I said, Mr. Dunn," he observed mildly. "I told you this whole business would be just between you and me."

CHAPTER VIII.

"Thank You, Uncle."

CAPTAIN ELISHA had been pretty well satisfied with the result of his visit to young Dunn at the latter's office. Malcolm had surrendered, perhaps not gracefully or unconditionally, but he had surrendered, and the condition—secrecy—was one which the captain himself had suggested.

Captain Elisha found some solace and forgetfulness of the unpleasant life he was leading in helping the stricken Moriarty family. Annie, the maid at the apartment, he swore to secrecy. She must not tell Miss Caroline of his visits to her parents' home. Dr. Henry also, though he could not understand why, promised silence. Caroline herself had engaged his services in the case, and he was faithful.



"Well, how much will it take to square things?"

"Goin' to be a pretty expensive job, ain't it, doctor?" asked the captain of the physician.

"Rather, I'm afraid."

"All right. If expense is necessary don't be afraid of it. You do just what you ought to and send the bill to me."

"But Miss Warren insisted upon my sending it to her. She said it was a private matter and one with which you as her guardian had nothing to do."

"I know. Caroline intends to use her own allowance, I s'pose. Well, let her think she will if 'twill please her. But when it comes to the settlement call on me. Give her any reason you want to. Say a—er—wealthy friend of the family come to life all at once and couldn't sleep unless he paid the costs."

"But there isn't any such friend, is there, Captain Warren? Other than yourself, I mean?"

Captain Elisha grinned in appreciation of a private poke. "There is somebody else," he admitted, "who'll pay a share, anyhow. But, anyhow, you saw wood or bones or whatever you have to do, and leave the rest to me. And don't tell Caroline or anybody else a word."

News from the Moriarty sick room continued favorable for a time. Then with alarming suddenness a change came. The broken hip was mending slowly, but poor Pat's age was against him, and the shock and long illness were too much for his system to fight. Dr. Henry shook his head dubiously when the captain asked questions. And one morning at breakfast Edwards informed him that the old man was dead.

Captain Elisha, though not greatly surprised, was shocked and grieved. It seemed such a needless tragedy, almost like murder, although there was no malice in it. And the thought of the fatherless children and the poverty of the stricken family made him shudder.

But just before evening his blueness had disappeared. He had just returned to his room, after stepping into the hall to drop his letter in the mail chute, when his niece knocked at the door.

"Captain Warren," she began hurriedly, "the last time I came to you—the last time I came here, I came to ask a favor, and you—I thought you"—

"Yes, Caroline," he said gravely, "I know what you mean. Won't you—won't you sit down?"

"Captain Warren," she began once more, "the time I came to you in this room you were, so I thought, unreasonable and unkind. I asked you for money to help a poor family in trouble, and you refused to give it to me."

"Will you forgive us?" she asked.

"No, Caroline," he interrupted, "I didn't refuse; you only thought I did."

She held up her hand. "Please let me go on," she begged. "I thought you refused, and I couldn't understand why. I was hurt and angry. I knew that father never would have refused me under such circumstances, and you were his brother. But since then, only today, I have learned that I was wrong. I have learned"—

She paused. The captain was silent. He was beginning to hope, to believe once more in his judgment of character, and yet with his hope and growing [illegible] as a trifle of anxiety.

"I have learned," went on his niece, "that I was mistaken. I can't understand yet why you wished to wait before saying 'yes,' but I do know that it must have been neither because you were unkind nor ungenerous. I have just come from those poor people, and they have told me everything."

Captain Elisha started. "What did they tell you?" he asked quickly. "Who told you?"

"Annie and her mother. They told me what you had done and were doing for them, how kind you had been all through the illness and today. Oh, I know you made them promise not to tell me, and you made the doctor and nurse promise too. But I knew some one had helped, and Annie dropped a hint. Then I suspected, and now I know. Those poor people!"

The captain, who had been looking at the floor and frowning a bit, suddenly glanced up to find his niece's eyes fixed upon him, and they were filled with tears.

"Will you forgive me?" she asked, rising from her chair and coming impulsively toward him. "I'm sorry I misjudged you and treated you so. You must be a very good man. Please forgive me."

He took her hand, which was swallowed up in his big one. His eyes were moist also.

"Lord love you, dearie," he said, "there's nothing to forgive. I realized that I must have seemed like a mean, stingy old scamp. Yet I didn't mean to be. I only wanted to look into this thing just a little—just as a matter of business, you know. And I— Caroline, did that doctor tell you anything more?"

"Any more?" she repeated in bewilderment. "He told me that you were the kindest man he had ever seen."

"Yes, yes. Well, maybe his eyesight's poor. What I mean is did he tell you anything about anybody else bein' in this with me?"

"Anybody else? What do you mean?"

"Oh, nothin', nothin'. I joked with him a spell ago about a wealthy relation of the Moriarty tribe turnin' up. 'Twas only a joke, of course. And yet Caroline, I—I think I'd ought to say"—

He hesitated. What could he say? Even a hint might lead to embarrassing questions, and he had promised Dunn.

"What ought you to say?" asked his niece.

Pearson makes some disclosures regarding his relations with Rogers Warren, the deceased brother of the captain. Don't miss the next installment.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Paper From Linen Rags.

When paper was first made from linen, rags is uncertain, but a writer of A. B. 1200 recorded that the linen wrappings round mummies were sold to the scribes to make paper for shopkeepers.

Temperance Notes

(Conducted by the National Woman's Christian Temperance Union.)

REASONS FOR RATIFYING.

Among seven reasons given by Wayne B. Wheeler, counsel for the Anti-Saloon league, why states should ratify the prohibition amendment are these:

A national evil requires a national remedy. Our interstate relations and the inherent, vicious character of the traffic make it a national evil. The alcoholic may drink liquor in one state and commit crime or become a public charge in another. The remedy must be as far-reaching as the evil. State boundaries are not adequate barriers to moral contagion and no state, careless in such matters, should be permitted to dump its drunks and other derelicts over the border line for a neighboring state to care for.

It will result in team work between the state and nation in dealing with the liquor traffic. The dry states are handicapped in their effort to enforce prohibition as long as the federal government continues to collect revenue from, and recognizes the outlawed traffic in, such states. National prohibition unites the state and federal government in a common policy for the public good.

The purposes of the federal government can be more easily consummated under national prohibition. One of the fundamental purposes of the federal constitution is "to promote the general welfare." The courts tell us this means to protect public health and public morals. The liquor traffic undermines or destroys both. We cannot carry out the fundamental purpose of our government if we foster, protect and encourage crime-producing business, like the beverage liquor traffic.

WHAT NATION-WIDE PROHIBITION MEANS.

From the noise that is made about it among the wets, one might think prohibition meant murder.

It doesn't.

It simply means more food, and that means lower food prices.

It means more efficient labor, and that means greater output, and that means lower prices again.

It means that the men who are now making beer and whisky will begin to make the equivalent of what they consume, and that, again, means lower prices for you.

It means more car space for legitimate commodities, and that means faster handling of freight, and that means lower prices.

It means more ship tonnage to be used in transporting material for our boys in France and for our allies, and that means not only lower prices for our allies, but the lives of American boys saved for America.

Incidentally, it means less crime, and that means less taxes. It means less pauperism, and that means less taxes. It means less insanity, and that means less taxes. It means less disease and death, and that means infinite myriads of things for the good old U. S. A.—Board of Temperance, Methodist Episcopal Church.

COMPENSATION FOR THE BREWERS.

As an example of how a brewery plant may become a constructive instead of a destructive agency—a "win-the-war" aid—we mention the Bellingham (Wash.) brewery. This is now owned by the Royal Dairy Products company and is equipped as a condensery and cold storage plant. Many similar cases might be cited. In wet states, also, brewers, seeing the sure approach of prohibition, are remodeling their plants for better and bigger business. The brewers are finding "compensation."

Incidentally it may be mentioned that the glass works which formerly made beer bottles may now turn its attention to the manufacture of milk bottles. Ice cream may take the place of the "schooner," and instead of the "growler" for the workman's noontide lunch will be used the thermos bottle of milk.

WOULD CUT PRISON POPULATION IN TWO.

"My experience on the state commission of prisons," says Mr. Richard Hurd of New York, "as well as my study of crime in other states, makes me confident that if wartime prohibition should be adopted the population of our prisons and jails would be cut in halves. As the total number of men in prison in the United States averages about 500,000, this would release 250,000 men for useful tasks. I would add that in making requirements for prison or jail accommodations in different counties the state commission of prisons takes official cognizance of whether a county is wet or dry, requiring only about half the accommodation for a dry county."

Took After Mamma and Papa.

"Bettie," said a mother to her naughty four-year-old daughter, "what's the reason you and your little brother Sammie can't get along without quarreling?"

"I don't know," was the reply, "unless it is because I take after you and Sammie takes after papa."

No Danger.

"I understand, Mrs. Grumpy, there was a great deal of vacillation in your family."

"Yes'm: but none of it ever took."

The trouble with most men is that they have to die to be appreciated.

HUMORS OF RENT COLLECTING

Seeming Proof That Stern Gatherer of Landlord's Tribute May Be Human, After All.

A Bostonian, owning houses in a neighboring city, received the following stately letter from the collector of rents. We publish it to show that a collector may be inexorable, yet have a vein of humor in his iron constitution. The letter was written in January:

"The soil-pipe, water pipes and other apparatus in the cellar of the old homestead are in their usual hibernal state—frozen stiff; so Lemuel reports, and adds that he offered to contribute to Bill a ton of coal for the furnace to generate a little warmth and partially overcome the deadly, gravelike chill of that subterraneous space; and Bill tells me that Lemuel is a cheerful liar, and made no such offer, and so I tell both what the other says, and leave them to fight it out, impressing on them, however, that the rent must be forthcoming just the same."

High as Haman.

There is one religious rite that war correspondents would often take delight in—swinging the censor.

A Tightwad.

"My motto is: 'Never give up.'"

"I noticed that when the Red Cross people came around."